

NIFA in the News – Week of February 13, 2012

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In the News

Mason County Vocational FFA receives 'Living to Serve' grant (Point Pleasant Register 2/11). The National FFA Organization recently awarded more than \$400,000 in rural youth development grants to 65 local FFA chapters in 19 states across the country. The Mason County Vocational FFA was one of the chapters that received a grant. The grants are administered by the USDA's National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) through the National FFA Organization. [Link](#)

Obama seeks \$32 billion farm safety net, conservation cuts (AgriPulse 2/13). President Obama's fiscal 2013 budget proposes \$23 billion in discretionary spending for USDA, down nearly 3 percent or almost \$700 million from the amount appropriated for the current fiscal year, and suggests \$32 billion in savings over the next decade in mandatory program spending on commodity programs, crop insurance subsidies and conservation programs. Increases the 2012 funding level for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative to \$325 million and targets areas that are key to American scientific leadership: human nutrition and obesity reduction; food safety; sustainable bioenergy; global food security; and climate change. [Link](#)

A Look at Youth-Related Spending in Obama's 2013 Budget (Youth Today 2/13). President Barack Obama unveiled his 2013 budget proposal today, which calls for \$3.8 trillion in spending and projects a \$901 billion deficit for the year. The Department of Agriculture budget includes \$19.7 billion for Child Nutrition Programs, which is \$1.5 billion over the 2012 appropriation. The Women, Infants & Children Program would receive \$7 billion, a \$400 million increase from 2012. The Agriculture budget also includes an increase from \$264 million to \$325 million for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, which offers competitive grants for number of potential subjects, including childhood obesity. [Link](#)

Good News for Research Funding at EPA, USDA, USGS (Science Insider 2/13). At the U.S.

Department of Agriculture, which would see a 3% decrease overall, the Administration once again shows it's a big fan of competitive agricultural research. Like last year, the request includes a 23% increase in competitive research, which would raise the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) budget to \$325 million. In contrast, so-called formula and capacity grants, which are awarded to land grant universities, would see a 1.2% decrease to \$676 million. [Link](#)

Farm groups and lawmakers respond to Obama's budget proposal (AgriPulse 2/13).

Although the proposal includes several reductions to the USDA budget, it increases the 2012 funding level for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative to \$325 million, which is a \$60 million increase from the 2012 level. "The strong backing for federally funded research shows the importance of growing the workforce when it comes to agronomists, crop and soil scientists; as well as attracting and educating the next generations of scientists," said American Society of Agronomy, Soil Science Society of America, and Crop Science Society of America Chief Executive Officer Ellen Bergfeld. "These scientists will help feed the world's burgeoning population in a sustainable manner while ensuring that the U.S. remains competitive globally. [Link](#)

President's budget proposal includes increase to Ag-related sciences (Environmental Expert 2/13).

The \$3.8 trillion federal budget proposal shows the U.S. Department of Agriculture would endure cuts of \$32 billion over 10 years, largely through the elimination of direct payments, as well as cuts of subsidies to crop insurers. However, the administration is proposing the U.S.D.A. receive \$325 million in competitive research grants through the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, an increase of \$60 million over the current budget levels. [Link](#)

USDA budget plan reflects 3% decrease (UPI 2/13). The proposal increases the 2012 funding level for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative to \$325 million and targets areas key to American scientific leadership -- human nutrition and obesity reduction, food safety, sustainable bioenergy, global food security and climate change. [Link](#)

ASA Statement on President's Budget Proposal for Fiscal Year 2013 (Southeast AgNet 2/14).

Soybean Association (ASA) President Steve Wellman, a soybean farmer from Syracuse, Neb., issues the following statement on the president's proposal: "ASA does applaud the president's request to increase the 2013 funding level for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) to \$325 million—an investment targeting areas key to American scientific leadership, including nutrition and obesity reduction, food safety, sustainable bioenergy, global food security, and climate change. "ASA welcomes the president's proposed increase for competitive agricultural research at USDA, as all soybean farmers recognize the challenges that growing world food needs present. Ag research is the key to meeting these needs, and the nation simply cannot sustain any further cuts to its agricultural research infrastructure if it is to address the needs of a global population that will grow to more than 9 billion people by 2050. We hope Congress will fund AFRI at the \$325 million level proposed by the president." [Link](#)

Researchers: Honeybee deaths linked to seed insecticide exposure (Press Zoom 2/14).

Honeybee populations have been in serious decline for years, and Purdue University scientists may have identified one of the factors that cause bee deaths around agricultural

fields. Analyses of bees found dead in and around hives from several apiaries over two years in Indiana showed the presence of neonicotinoid insecticides, which are commonly used to coat corn and soybean seeds before planting. The research showed that those insecticides were present at high concentrations in waste talc that is exhausted from farm machinery during planting. The North American Pollinator Protection Campaign and the USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative funded the research. [Link](#)

Pledge to end child hunger still on Obama menu (The Oregonian 2/14). The commitment to addressing hunger, and improving nutrition, goes literally down to ground level. Today, the Department of Agriculture is announcing 27 grants across the country "to build community food systems and fight hunger and food insecurity." Two of the recipients are in Portland, including the Zenger Farm, a working farm on public land on Southeast Foster Road and 117th Avenue, to set up a Neighborhood Food Innovation Project to improve access to fresh produce in some of the hungriest parts of the city. [Link](#)

Fresh ideas for Portland farmers markets (Portland Press Herald 2/15). Mainers who receive federally funded food assistance will be able to use their electronic benefit cards to buy produce at certain farmers markets and farm stands in Portland and Lewiston, thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The USDA announced Tuesday that it has awarded a \$300,000 grant to Cultivating Community, a nonprofit agency in Portland that promotes community development through agriculture training programs, especially for young people and immigrants. [Link](#)

President Releases Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Proposal (The Poultry Site 2/16). Other fiscal year 2013 USDA budget items proposed by the administration include: \$325 million for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, which is a \$60 million increase from the 2012 level. This program, administered by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), is charged with funding research, education, and extension grants that address key problems of national, regional, and multi-state importance in sustaining all components of agriculture, including farm efficiency and profitability and food safety, among others. [Link](#)

USDA awards almost \$5 million for community food projects (AgriPulse 2/16). USDA announced 27 grants this week for local organizations to build community food systems and fight hunger and food insecurity. USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) provided the awards through its Community Food Projects program. The new projects, totaling \$4.8 million in funding, include a teen-run community kitchen incubator, faith-based community food assessments, a program to help indigenous people return to healthful eating, and a youth-led food security movement. [Link](#)

President Proposes Ag \$32B Funding Cut (Farm Futures 2/16). One welcomed part of the budget was the president's request to increase the 2013 funding level for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) to \$325 million, an increase of \$60 million over current budget levels. [Link](#)

Obama Budget's Impact on Agriculture (Wisconsin Ag Connection 2/17). The following analysis of the recently proposed federal budget has been submitted by the National Association of Wheat Growers: The President's budget proposes increases of \$68 million to USDA's Research, Education and Economics mission area, known as REE. In a briefing, REE

head Dr. Catherine Woteki said she was pleased with the budget request, noting that REE was one of the few program areas that has a proposed increase. The request for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) competitive grants program was \$325 million, as it was in the President's FY2012 budget proposal. In FY2012 \$264 million was eventually appropriated by Congress for AFRI. NAWG has supported increasing AFRI funding with a goal of reaching its \$700 million authorization in the 2008 Farm Bill. In early 2011, 56 wheat and barley researchers from 28 institutions were awarded a \$25 million AFRI grant to support work on drought tolerance, nitrogen use efficiency and rust diseases, which has already shown significant progress. [Link](#)

Young rancher honored for environmental stewardship (Cattle Network 2/17). The National Young Farmers Educational Association (NYFEA), Montana State University and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln named Todd Inglee and family of Arvada, Colorado, owners of Ralston Valley Beef, as their 2011 Environmental Leader. It is sponsored by the National Young Farmers Educational Association (NYFEA), Montana State University and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and is supported by USDA-National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The award is a component of the Building Environmental Leaders in Animal Agriculture program or BELAA. BELAA is a USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program that aims to educate young and beginning producers on environmental management resources while developing their leadership potential. [Link](#)

Mixed reactions to Obama 2013 budget proposal (Southwest Farm Press 2/17). Despite the cuts, "to help sustain record farm income, we will invest in research and development to improve agricultural productivity," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack in a statement. "The budget makes a 23 percent increase in funding for our premier competitive grants program to support the most worthy projects and continues support for in-house research and the land grant universities. We'll continue our efforts to combat destructive pests and disease that threaten crops and livestock. [Link](#)